


SPECIFICATION AMENDMENTS

Please amend the following paragraphs of the written description as indicated:

 [0033] Turning now to FIGS. 1-5, a preferred embodiment of a method for locking a firearm 20, according to the present invention, will now be given. The method involves positioning an integral blocking or locking device or means 22 (hereinafter referred to as a locking device) at one of a plurality of pre-selected locations on the firearm 20, wherein the pre-selected location is preferably chosen such that: (i) when locked, the locking device 22 interferes with the firearm's action, preventing it from being closed, and the firearm from being fired; (ii) the locking device 22 can only be locked when the firearm's action is in an "open" position (*i.e.*, an intermediate operational position wherein the firearm is physically incapable of being fired regardless of the condition of any safety mechanism or if the trigger is pulled, and wherein the chamber is visually exposed); and (iii) to the extent one is able to operatively disassemble the firearm (*i.e.*, take the firearm apart without such damage as would render it useless) when the locking device is locked, the locking device cannot be accessed and/or defeated internally.

[0034] Preferably, as shown in FIG. 5, the integral blocking or locking device 22 (blocking means) comprises some sort of lock mechanism or body 24 having a selectively-extendable plunger, rod, or bolt 26 that lies in an extended position 28 when the lock mechanism 24 is locked (via a key, electronic signal, or the like) and a retracted position 30 when the lock mechanism 24 is unlocked. Suitable locking devices are discussed further below. However, as should be appreciated, any number of other locking or blocking devices or means are also suitable for carrying out the method of the present invention, and further explanation herein with respect to particular types of locking devices is exemplary only. Also, by "integral," it is meant that the locking device is part of the firearm, and is not a separate component (or set of components) that is selectively affixed to or removed from the firearm by a user for securing or unsecuring the firearm, respectively.

Q2 [0048] FIGS. 6A-10B show a first integral blocking or locking device 120 (blocking means) suitable for use as the locking device 22, for carrying out the method described above, or for otherwise locking firearms. The locking device 120 is attached to and extends through the side of a firearm, *e.g.*, as to the receiver 42 of a shotgun 20. In an unlocked position (see FIG. 10A), a lock plunger portion 126 of the locking device 120 is retracted, with the shotgun 20 being operable in a normal manner. When engaged, as shown in FIGS. 8 and 10B, with the action of the shotgun in an open position, the lock plunger 126 extends into the interior of the shotgun 20, blocking or engaging the shotgun's shell carrier or some other portion of the action, locking the shotgun open, and rendering the shotgun 20 incapable of firing ammunition.

Q3 [0054] The lock body nut 318 138 has an inner threaded surface, and is complementary in size to the cylindrical extension 150 of the lock body 310 130.

Q4 [0063] Turning now to FIGS. 11A-12, a second integral blocking or locking device 220 (blocking means) for firearms, according to the present invention, and suitable for use as the locking device 22, will now be given. Where applicable, similar elements have been given the same reference numerals as above, but offset by 100 (*e.g.*, the key 128 of the first locking device 120 vs. a key 228 of the second locking device 220).

Q5 [0070] As should be appreciated, to facilitate easy assembly of the locking device 220, the various parts can be dimensioned such that when the plunger 226 is inserted fully into the lock body 230 and the guide engagement slot 302 is aligned with the entry slot 256, the end of the pin 232, when inserted through the hole 300, lies within the fore end of the groove 308 (the end closest to the plunger shaft 260).

Q6 [0072] To lock the locking device 220, the action must be open, as discussed above (because the plunger would hit the shell carrier or some other portion of the action if the action was closed). The key 228 is inserted into the keyway 252 through the entry slot 256 until the key 228 engages the guide engagement slot 302 on the plunger guide head 258 (*e.g.*, with the end of the neck 240 extending into the bore 304 and the two teeth 244a, 244b respectively resting in the opposed notches 306a, 306b). The key 228 is rotated clockwise, causing the plunger 226 to

Q6 rotate clockwise. As the plunger 226 rotates, it is forced forwards via the helical groove 308 tracking along the stationary pin 232. At the point where the pin 232 meets the rear end of the groove 308 (the end closest to the key engagement slot 302), the plunger is fully extended, as shown in FIG. 12, and the key 228 can no longer be rotated clockwise. At this point, the plunger 226 extends beyond the lock body nut 238 and into the interior of the shotgun 20, where it blocks the rotation of the shotgun's shell carrier and thereby prevents the action from closing and the shotgun from being fired. The key 228 is pulled rearwards through the cylindrical bore 254, rotated until the teeth 244a, 244b align with the entry slot 256, and extracted.

Q1 [0075] FIGS. 13-15C show a third integral blocking or locking device 420 (blocking means) for firearms, according to the present invention, and suitable for use as the locking device 22. The third integral locking device 420 is generally similar to the second locking device 220, but is preferable in that it is slightly simpler and more compact. As in the first and second embodiments, the third integral locking device 420 is attached to and extends through the side of a firearm. In an unlocked position, as shown in FIGS. 14A-14C, a lock barrel or plunger portion 426 of the locking device 420 is retracted, with the shotgun or other firearm 20 being operable in a normal manner. In a locked position, as shown in FIGS. 15A-15C, with the shotgun's action open, the lock plunger 426 extends into the interior of the shotgun 20, blocking the movement of the shotgun's shell carrier, locking the shotgun open, and rendering the shotgun 20 incapable of firing ammunition.
